There is, however, one area that might be explored further regarding these Aboriginal women and the history of education. Religious women – Roman Catholic Sisters in Canada and Protestant missionary women in Australia – taught the first two generations. Were these women teachers mere assistants to male missionaries? Did they have their own organizations and histories? Did they bargain with patriarchy for scope for their own projects? How did the religious women's culture and history affect the Aboriginal women? The Sisters of the Child Jesus, who taught in British Columbia residential schools, were based in France but encouraged Irish and Aboriginal vocations. Some Carrier women chose to join these Sisters, as Jo-Anne Fiske has pointed out in publications about the Carrier and the Lejac Residential School. The Sechelt women involved in Weiss' project had relatives among the Carrier. Valerie Bourne's mother, Melanie, was a Carrier from Stoney Creek, a sibling of Mary John (pp. 212-16). Although residential school legal cases have closed religious archives to researchers, it is still possible to consult Department of Indian Affairs records. My notes on a letterbook of the Inspector of Indian Agencies in British Columbia for 1914 show that eight Sisters staffed the Sechelt Boarding School, including Sister Henriette (Indian). Were there Adnyamathana women who joined the Protestant women's missionary groups? Are their archives open to researchers?

That said, *Trying to Get it Back* is a great book. Anyone researching indigenous women, education, and culture should read it.

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Norah L. Lewis. *Freedom to Play: We Made Our Own Fun*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002. Pp. 224.

After a four-year hiatus in constructing books from letters written to early-twentieth-century rural Canadian newspapers, Norah Lewis has brought forth a new addition to her series with

Freedom to Play: We Made Our Own Fun. In the past, Lewis has focused on the lives of the letter writers – children for her *"I Want to Join Your Club": Letters from Rural Children, 1900-1920* (1996) and rural women in her *"Dear Editor and Friends": Letters from Rural Women of the North West, 1900-1920* (1998), but for this new book, Lewis has expanded upon her usual primary sources and switched her focus from the writers themselves to a topic closely connected to their lives – children's play in the era before widespread television reception.

In *Freedom to Play*, Lewis presents the reader with a view of the games, activities, and amusements that were part of the culture of Canadian childhood from 1900 to the mid-1950s by presenting letters written to the children's pages of five weekly rural papers during the period, as well as written contributions, interviews, or short conversation transcripts from more than forty adult individuals, and some short selections taken from childhood recollections of nine Canadian authors. In her introductory chapter, she prefaces this collection with a brief review of research concerning the play of children, discusses her methodology, and reveals her findings – all the while interweaving snippets from the documents to follow. Among her findings are the following: children felt free to play in the years before television and to explore both their rural and urban environments; many of their games were physically active and self-organized; toys and equipment were often limited but children created or adapted whatever was needed to play; domestic animals played important roles as companions and playmates while wild animals were a source of interest, food, and income; special days and holidays were welcome breaks from seasonal routines; and, not surprisingly, in spite of the pleasant recollections of many, for others the period involved painful memories, mostly connected to the two world wars and the Great Depression. In addition, in one intriguing discovery, Lewis found that although letter writers claimed to enjoy being involved in organizations for children and youth, adults tended not to recall such organizations as a vital part of their childhood.

Lewis presents her edited, primary documents in the six chapters that follow with minimal comment and analysis, under chapter titles such as "Playing Is Playing Games," "Animals: Friend, Foe, or Food," and "There Was Always Something to Do." The documents are intermixed within each chapter – children's letters, adult contributions, and author recollections – with letters predominating, and one further discovery to be made is just how

different the three sorts of sources are in texture. One senses the loss of propinquity that takes place in degree from child's voice to adult memory and to the polished and purposeful author recollection. Despite her assurances that adult bias was minimized by the application of Elliott West's three standards for memory credibility – clarity, repetition, and congruence – an academic historian may find a little unsettling a childhood recollection entitled, "Whoopie Ti Yi Yo!" Also, despite the sincerity under which each memory is recalled, there is something almost palpable about the density of the filters through which childhood is seen when moving from one category of document to the next.

The six chapters as a whole can be amusing as occasional leisure reading – the collection is apt to call to mind a reader's personal recollections of their own childhood play – and scholars in the field of children's play will likely find the compilation to be of more focused interest. Of the three categories of documents, the children's letters are most entertaining, due to their freshness of perspective and careful construction, while the adult memories provide a broad panorama of childhoods recalled and the author recollections a spectrum of differing prose styles and approaches to the subject. The study also offers up some interesting possibilities for further research into Lewis's letters. For example, contacting the letter writers still living for some historical hindsight about their letter-writing activities might prove useful to others interested in using this type of resource. Also of interest to most readers will be the twenty-three illustrations, including twenty photographs of varying clarity, that are interspersed throughout the text, each connected to a specific letter, memory, or author recollection.

Although Lewis introduces the contents of her book as being a representative view of children's play in Canada, in truth the book is heavily biased toward English-Canadian childhood play experiences. To be fair, Lewis has made an effort to include ethnic and indigenous memories and recollections in this book; however, one wonders why no French-Canadian childhood memories appear among the pages. There is undoubtedly a reasonable explanation for this omission, which ought to have been addressed in the book's introduction. Likewise absent is any reference to the underworld of childhood play, the sort of play that would have invoked adult wrath and punishment if uncovered, and which most adults sense would bring censure even as a memory. But it did exist, and without at least fleeting mention of it, the picture of play presented by the book appears slightly rose-coloured and less than comprehensive.

More critically, there is a basic structural problem with *Freedom to Play* that did not exist in the earlier works by Lewis. That is, whereas letters alone can be connected with minimal commentary or analysis, connecting children's letters to adult memories, or adult memories to author recollections, or children's letters to author recollections, requires more transitional commentary than Lewis has provided. Without smooth transitions between the three types of documents, reading through the six chapters can be a trying process at times, a problem that might have been overcome by employing a variety of transition strategies for this book, rather than holding fast to a formula that worked well with a less complex set of resources.

These criticisms aside, *Freedom to Play* is a useful addition to the historiography of childhood in Canada. As a general reference, the book will undoubtedly prove practical to historians; to a researcher in the field of children's play it is essential reading; and for instructors of the History of Childhood or the History of Education, there are myriad possibilities for using the documents it contains. Lewis is to be commended for exploiting her resources so well as to produce three books in such short order and, with this latest work, for exploring new ways to use those resources to broaden our knowledge about the culture of childhood in Canada before television impacted upon it.

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Kathryn Carter, ed. *The small details of LIFE: 20 diaries by women in Canada, 1830-1996*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. 488.

The small details of LIFE: 20 diaries by women in Canada, 1830-1996, is an ambitious project. In her acknowledgements, Kathryn Carter identifies the market niche this collection hopes to fill: realizing that "no book featured a geographically wide range of Canadian women" (p. ix) as she compiled *Diaries in English by Women in Canada, 1753-1995: An Annotated Bibliography* (1997),